

Of Justification by Faith.

A

S E R M O N

Preached before the

CLERGY,

In the Parish Church of

All - Saints in Chichester,

October 7. 1702.

By the Right Reverend

JOHN Lord Bishop of CHICHESTER.
Williams

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L O N D O N :

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Of the Corporation by Law

A

CHURCH OF ST. MARY

Prescribed before the

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In the Parish Church of

St. Mary, Clerkenwell



CHURCH OF ST. MARY

LONDON

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R O M. V. I.

*Therefore being justified by Faith, we have
Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus
Christ.*



Justification by Faith is, by One of the first in the Reformation in Foreign Parts, said to be, *Articulus stantis & cadentis Ecclesiae*, a Point on which the Foundation of the Christian Religion doth subsist.

And being of such Consequence in it self, as we must needs own it to be, not for his saying so much (though that is well enough expressed) as for that it is grounded on Scripture, it is of great Use to have a right Notion of it. And it is for that reason that I have at this time made choice of this Subject, which our Apostle in his other Epistles, but more especially in this, doth so much insist and enlarge upon.

In discoursing upon which, the Apostle considers Mankind under a Threefold Character, as *Gentiles, Jews, and Christians.*

The First of these he discourses upon in the First Chapter, and describes their State, which in the Conclusion appears to be very deplorable.

The Second State, though much more excellent than the First, having a Revelation, which they had not, yet was very defective, and even under that Dispensation there needed a Reformation.

So that the Apostle infers in the Third Chapter, ver. 9, &c. that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were all under Sin; and all the world was guilty before God, ver. 19.

What then is to be done?

There remains therefore the Evangelical State, which is by way of Remedy: This the Apostle calls a *Righteousness without the Law*, chap. 3. 21, 22. but which (he saith) was manifested by the Law and the Prophets, even the *Righteousness of God which is by Faith of Jesus Christ*. And of this he gives an Instance, chap. 4. in *Abraham*, who lived before the Law given to the *Jews*, and consequently could not be justified by it: And yet *Abraham* was justified, and had a Faith which was imputed to him for righteousness; ver. 20, 21, 22.

From hence the Apostle proceeds to the Application of this History, ver. 23, 24, 25.

Now, saith he, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom

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it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

From all which he infers in the Text, *Therefore being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In which Words there is,

I. The State we are brought into, signified in the Term *justified*.

II. The Condition upon which we are justified, and that is Faith: *Being justified by Faith.*

III. The Privilege consequent upon our Justification, and that is, *Peace with God.*

IV. The Means by which this Grace and Favour is conferred upon us, that such a Covenant is made, and such Conditions are offered, and such a Privilege is annexed to it; and that is *through Christ. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I shall observe this Order, in the farther Prosecution of this Argument.

I. I shall consider the State we are admitted into, and that is, That we are *justified*.

To justify is a Forinsecal or Law-Term, and is no other than to clear, acquit, and discharge by some

some solemn Act and Declaration. So Deut. 25. 1. *If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the Judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous:* That is, if a Person appears upon a due and impartial hearing, to be innocent of the Fact he is taxed with, he shall forthwith be acquitted.

So that to justify, implies that a Person is impleaded, and has an Accusation brought against him, and that upon his Tryal being found not guilty, he is juridically and finally discharged.

And this may respect a Threefold Case.

1. It respects the Case of a Person, that upon a Charge and Allegation against him, after a full Tryal and Examination has been found innocent, and by the Sentence of the Court has been thereupon acquitted.

But this is a Case that belongs not to us, it's a Plea none can make or insist upon, with respect to God, as our Apostle had shewed, chap. 1. 2. 3. Where he had proved both Jews and Gentiles to be all under Sin, and all the world to be guilty before God; as he saith, chap. 3. from ver. 9. to v. 23.

2. Another Case is, when the Delinquent has upon due Examination been found guilty, but by some after-Acts doth make such sufficient Amends and Reparation for his former Miscarriages, and thereby

thereby deserves so well of his Prince and Country, that it would be a manifest Piece of Injustice to impute his former Faults to him, and punish him for them. This is the Case of Merit. So the Apostle, chap. 4. 4. *To him that worketh* [so as to Merit,] *is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*

This again belongs not to us; for all *boasting* is here *excluded*, chap. 3. 27. For if man could not merit when he was Innocent, and neither retaliate what he had received, nor claim Eternal Life upon the virtue of any Performances of his; then how can he be supposed to merit, when he has been found Guilty, and justly forfeited the Favour he before received?

3. Another Case is, when a Delinquent is found Guilty, but upon an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion tender'd by the Prince to such as are within the Terms of it, and upon pleading such an Act of Grace, he is discharg'd.

And this is our Case; When we that were before Criminals, and so fell under the Sentence of Death and Condemnation, were by the special Grace and Favour of God taken into a new Covenant; and without any pretence to Innocency on the one hand, or to Merit on the other, were justified and received into Favour. So our Apostle, chap 4. 5. *To*

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him that worketh not, [by way of Merit,] but believeth on him that justifieth [those that were once] ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness: That is, is so accounted, that it shall be accepted as if it was a Righteousness originally and compleatly Perfect; and he shall be as fully Justified, as if he had been wholly Innocent.

So that Justification in the Gospel Sence, is not with respect to the Innocency or Merit of the Person, as if he was clear of all Fault, or deserved not to be punished; but that though Guilty, and liable to the Penalty, there is Mercy allowed, and offer'd; upon a claim to which, and the fulfilling of the Terms therein appointed, he is by a Rule of Court, as it were, acquitted. As a Criminal has a Right to the Mercy and Favour of the Bench, that produces a Pardon, or pleads an act of Indemnity, and upon such a Plea is in Equity to be discharged, and no longer to be detained, and no more to be punished, than if he had never offended.

Act. 13. Such are then *justified from all things* that might
39. heretofore have justly been alledged against them.

I Cor. 6. They are therefore then said to be *washed* and to
II. be *righteous*; and have a Claim and a Right to all
I Joh. 3. the Privileges of that State. (As I shall presently
7. shew.)

But

But this Justification is not so of Grace, as to be without any Condition on our Part. The Apostle doth cautiously prevent any such Surmise and Misconstruction, by what he here saith, *being justified by Faith.* To grant an act of Oblivion, belongs to God the Governor; to Justify belongs also to him, and both are free Acts of His; (as I shall shew.)

But the Condition, though appointed by God, belongs to us, and what we are to perform, it is by Faith. He it is that justifies us upon our Faith. And that is the next thing to be Consider'd.

II. Here is the Condition upon which we are Justified, and that is *Faith.* We are sometimes in Scripture said to be Justified by *the Grace of God* and by *the Blood of Jesus*, as we are here said to be Justified by Faith; but all conspiring to compleat the Sence.

(1.) For when we are said to be Justified *freely by the Grace of God*, Rom. 3. 24. it is as that was the impulsive Cause moving him thereunto; it being purely of his Grace that Almighty God offers us Terms of Peace and Reconciliation, antecedent to any Act of ours. So our Apostle, Rom. 4. 6. *David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, that is, without any Consideration of what was done, or

Titus 3.
5.

could be done on our Part to procure it.

And accordingly, the Gospel-Covenant is here called *the free gift*, ver. 15, 16.

chap. 8.

33.

chap. 3.

26.

In which Sence, it is God, and God alone, that Justifies, and so he is call the *Justifier*.

(2.) We are said to be Justified by the *Blood of Christ*. So it is here said, ver. 9. that is, as the Death and Sufferings of Christ were the procuring and meritorious cause of our Justification; and by Virtue of which, he is said to have *purged us from our sins*, and we are said to be *washed from our sins in his blood*, Rev. 1. 5.

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9. 14.

In which Sense it is Christ, and he alone, that Justifies. So our Apostle, ver. 18. *By the Righteousness of one [that is, Christ] the free gift [of Pardon and Reconciliation, ver. 10.] came upon all men unto justification of life.* By Him alone, and by no other, are we thus Justified. Thus doth the 11th Article of our Church describe it. viz. "We are accounted Righteous, only for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by Faith, and not by our own Works and Deservings. Wherefore that we are Justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of Comfort; as it is more largely expressed in the Homilies.

(3.) We

(3.) We are justified by *Faith*; so in the Text: That is, as Faith in Christ is the Condition upon which we are justified; and is so necessary a Condition, that without it we cannot be justified.

In which Sence it is Faith alone that justifies, as our Article saith.

So that we are said to be justified by each of these; that is, by the Grace of God, by the Blood of Christ, and by Faith: By the Grace of God, as the Impulsive and Moving Cause; by the Blood of Jesus, as the Meritorious Cause; and by Faith, as the Condition: And we are justified by each of these alone; that is, there is no other Impulsive Cause but the Grace of God; no other Meritorious Cause, but the Blood of Christ; and no other Condition, but Faith.

All which do amount to thus much, That Almighty God of his mere Grace and Favour did send his Son to dye as a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of Mankind; and upon our Faith in him, doth for his sake justify us, and deal with us as if we never had offended. So our Apostle, ver. 10. *When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* And chap. 4. 5. *To him that believeth, &c. his Faith is counted for righteousness.*

And since all this in the Conclusion doth depend upon our Faith, it remains to take that into our
Con-

Consideration, that we may have a right Notion and Understanding of it.

'Tis said here, *being justified by Faith* ; by which we are to understand, not a mere Notional Faith (for that is no other than an Assent to the Truth of what is revealed) but a Faith in operation, a Faith active and vigorous, and that doth comprehend in it all that Duty and those Graces, which elsewhere in Scripture are made the Condition of the Gospel-Covenant, and which give us a Title to all the Privileges of it, such as Forgiveness of Sin, Adoption and Glorification: And that is a Practical Faith, and to which Repentance, Obedience, and Perseverance do belong, as the essential parts of it. When I say, that the Faith which justifies is supposed to include in it such Conditions, and as necessarily to be so understood, as if particularly expressed, it is agreeable to Scripture-Order, where it is customary,

(1.) To understand Notional Points and Phrases in a Practical Sense. As when Life Eternal is promised to the Knowledge of God, *John 17. 3. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* That Knowledge is not there supposed to be alone ; but as accompanied with the Love of God, and Obedience to him, &c. And since Faith alone can no more

save,

save, than Knowledge alone can ; when the like Jam. 2. Blessings are promised to Faith that are to Know-^{14.} edge, it must be understood with the same Proviso, and in a Complex and Practical Sense. In like manner,

(2.) Where there is a Connexion of Graces, and Duties, and Acts, all concurring to the same end, it is usual in Scripture to put any one for the whole of that kind ; and all are there supposed to be present and mutually concurring. As it is in Repentance, of which Confession to God is but one Branch ; and yet being an essential and necessary part of that godly sorrow which worketh Repentance, the Apostle puts it for the whole : *1 John 1. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, &c.*

And thus it is in the Case before us ; because Faith is a necessary Condition of the Gospel-Covenant, and the first Principle of all Spiritual Life and Operation in us, we are therefore said to be justified and saved by it : Not as if that alone, exclusive of all other Graces and Duties, did justify and save, without Repentance, Regeneration, and new Obedience, without the Love of God, and other Christian Graces ; but supposing them, equally necessary to our Acceptance.

Thus.

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Thus the *Publican* is said to be justified upon his Repentance, *Luke* 18. 14. And a New Creature avails to the same purpose as Faith. For when the Apostle had said, *Gal.* 5. 6. *Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by love;* in the next Chapter he saith, *Gal.* 6. 15. *Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;* thereby intimating, that Faith and Regeneration are the same, or rather are necessarily required and conjoined to the same Effect; so that where the one is, there the other also is.

And thus it is also in Faith and Works: For as our Apostle here saith we are justified by Faith, so he saith *the doers of the Law shall be justified*, *Rom.* 2. 13.

And St. James expressly saith, That *Abraham* was justified by Works, *Jam.* 2. 21. And, which is remarkable, appeals for the Proof of this, to the very same Scripture-Quotation of *Gen.* 15. 5, 6, which St. Paul produces for his Assertion, that we are justified by Faith, *Rom.* 4. 3, 22.

For thus St. James argues, *Was not Abraham our father justified by Works, when he had offered his son Isaac upon the Altar, &c.?* And it follows, *The Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness,* ver. 23.

Now

Now how could the Two Apostles quote the same Scripture, the one for a Justification by Faith, and the other for a Justification by Works, if the Faith in one were not the same as Works in the other? Nay, how could St. James prove his Assertion, That *Abraham* was justified by Works, from a Quotation that *his Faith was imputed to him for righteousness*, if his Faith and Works were not the same? And that is no other than a Practical, an Obediential Faith.

Such a Faith as *Abraham's* was, who staggered not at the Promise. Such a Faith as *Abraham's* was, when at God's Command he offered his Son *Isaac* upon the Altar. And thus St. James proposes him as an Example, ver. 22. *Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect: And therein, saith he, the Scripture was fulfilled.* If we take this Key, and thus understand it, that Apostle's way of Arguing is Clear and Natural, and home to the purpose he produces it for. So he divinely infers, as the sum of all, ver. 24. *Ye see then how that by Works a man is justified, and not by Faith only; that is, We are Justified by both, both concurring to the same end.*

And therefore what the Scripture doth thus joyn together, we are not to sunder; lest we pervert the Order and the Sence of it.

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We find in Scripture, That by the word *Soul* is often understood the Person, consisting of Body and Soul. Thus the Souls that went down into *Egypt* are said to be 66.

Gen. 46.
26.

We find (as aforesaid) that Confession is taken for Repentance.

But now how absurd would it be to conclude from hence, That the Souls of *Jacob's* Family went down into *Egypt* without their Bodies? Or that if we only confess our Sins to God, though we forsake them not, they shall be forgiven; and by Virtue of that Confession alone we shall be Accepted and Pardoned?

And as absurd is it to think, when we are said to be Justified by Faith, that Evangelical Obedience is thereby excluded, without which *Faith is dead*, saith St. *James*.

Jam. 2.
20, 25.

To conclude this, we see what a strict connexion there is between all the Graces and Duties, and I may add, the Privileges of the Gospel, which make up the whole of that Covenant, as to us, betwixt God and Man. And this Chain is admirably represented by our Apostle, *Whom he called, them he also Justified, and whom he Justified, them he also Glorified*: (for so I understand it.)

chap. 8.
30.

And consequently, upon the same Terms as they shall be glorified hereafter, upon the same they are also

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also Justified now : And if they are not Glorified upon any other Terms than Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, they are not Justified upon any other.

For if a Person might be Justified upon any other Terms, than those are which he shall be Glorified upon, then he may (contrary to our Apostle's arguing) be Justified, and yet not be Glorified. But if he that is Justified, shall be Glorified, (as our Apostle assures us) then what is necessary to Glorification is also necessary to Justification : And consequently, if the Faith that Glorifies be not a Solitary Faith, but inclusive of Obedience, then the Faith that Justifies is of the same kind ; and a man can be Justified no more than he can be Saved, without a Faith working by Love, and an Obedience suitable to our Faith.

Having thus far consider'd the nature of that Faith, which our Justification depends upon, I shall in the Third Place proceed to the

III. Consideration, Of the Privilege of that State, which is *Peace with God*.

And that implies,

Pardon for what is past ; an Acceptance of our Persons and Services for the time to come, and a Reward consequent upon it.

(1.) Pardon for what is past.

Being Justified by Faith, that is, having performed those Conditions which the Gospel requires, we have Peace with God, all ground of Difference is removed. We are then, by Virtue of the Atonement made by Christ, in a State of Reconciliation; and notwithstanding all the Threatnings denounced against Sinners, and which belonged to us whilst in a state of Unbelief, Impenitence, and Disobedience, we are as secure, as if there never had been any such Threatnings, nor we had ever been obnoxious to them. For where the Gospel Qualifications are found, such as Faith and Repentance, we are as fully Justified and Acquitted as if we had never Offended, but had inviolably kept the whole Law of unerring and perfect Obedience; and may with as much assurance plead the Promise of God in our own Favour, for the Remission of our Sins, and for a Title to Everlasting Life and Salvation, as *Adam* might have pleaded a Right to Life upon the Promise, if he had never fallen, but continued steadfast in his Original State.

For Repentance is to us, what Innocence was to him, and places us in the same Circumstances of Favour. So that now it is not the Nature, the Number, or the Kind of Sins past, nor the Aggravations they may be attended with, that debar

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us, and render us incapable of the Divine Mercy; but it is the rejecting of the Terms offer'd, our Unbelief, and final Impenitence, that do exclude us. We are now justified from all things: And there is now no condemnation, Rom. 8. 1. Acts 13. 39.

And is not this an unspeakable Privilege? For what is a Sinner, but one that has God for his Enemy, that stands obnoxious to the Displeasure of an Almighty Power? What is a Sinner, but one that has the Law against him, and by the just Sentence of which he stands convicted, and condemned to receive the Wages of Sin, which is Death? What is a Sinner, but one that has the whole Creation against him? The Flood swept away the Ungodly. The Fire from Heaven consumed a wicked Sodom. And it is the Creature as armed in the Cause of their Creator. What is a Sinner, but one that hath his own self for his Enemy, and the Terrors of his own guilty Mind to conflict with? What is a Sinner, but the most miserable of all Creatures?

Ask but the Sinner himself, when he is from under the Power of Temptation, when his Blood is cool, when he is alone, and hath a Heart to consider. Ask him when under the Pressure of Affliction, when confined to his Bed or his Chamber by a painful or wasting Disease, and by that taken

taken off from all the Diversions of the World, and that perhaps his Body as well as his Mind pay the Price of his Extravagances.

Ask him again, when he is upon the Confines of Death, and he is taking his last Farewell of all his Pleasures and Sensual Gratifications; when his Pomp and his Wealth, and the dearest Enjoyments of Life are upon the point of expiring with himself: When there is nothing left him, nothing to pass with him over the Gulph, but the Terrors of a guilty Mind, the sad Presages of what he is to expect as the Wages of all in another State.

Ask again that miserable Wretch (if he were to be consulted) when he left behind him his Plenty and his Five dissolute Brethren, *Luke 16. 23.* when he wanted a Drop of Water to cool his inflamed Tongue.

Ask any of these, If the Guilt and Punishment of Sin be not a Burden insupportable; and consequently, the Forgiveness of it the greatest Privilege that can be tendered to, hoped for, or enjoyed by Mankind.

Nay, if the Sinner be resolved to run the Venture, and is not to be instructed or persuaded by the dear-bought Experience of such that have gone before him in that unhappy Course; it is but a little while, when he will be taught by his own, what
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it is to want a Pardon, when he is to seek it, and perhaps seeks it too late to find it: When he will find the Door to be shut, and Mercy inexorable to all his importunate Intreaties; and he like the Five Foolish Creatures in the Gospel, shall be answered with a *Verily, I know you not.* Mat. 25. 12.

And yet as great a Privilege as this is, 'tis what every Sinner is invited to accept of; 'tis what every Sinner in this World hath the Promise of, if qualified for it by Faith in Christ, and Repentance from dead Works. He will then be justified, he shall be pardoned.

This is given as the Sum of the Gospel, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,* 2 Cor. 5. 19.

2. The next Branch of the Privilege belonging to a Justified State, and included in the Phrase, *Peace with God*, is, Acceptance of our Persons, called in Scripture *Adoption*, which gives us the Title of Children. So our Apostle, chap. 8. 15. *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.*

A Title that sets us in the nearest Relation unto God, and gives us the surest Title to his Favour. A Consideration that begets in us a blessed Tranquility of Mind, a secure Dependance upon him,
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an entire Resignation of our selves to his disposal, a patient expectation of Events; and quiets and establishes the Heart under all Difficulties whatsoever.

For what of Kindness, Tenderness, and Compassion, what of Beneficence and Favour is there not comprehended in so near a Relation? The Apostle St. John wants words to express it: Behold, saith he, *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* ----- *Beloved, now we are the sons of God,* 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2. See how our Saviour improves it, Matth. 7. 9. *What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?* And accordingly he hath taught us, when we pray, to say, *Our Father which art in heaven:* Which is the ground of an humble Assurance in our selves, and of a ~~firm~~ Confidence and Trust in him; that like an Indulgent Father he will pity our Infirmities, pardon our Sins upon our Repentance, and in all things act suitably to the Relation we stand in to him, and to the Circumstances in which we are. So the Psalmist represents it; *Like as a Father pitieth his children,* so the Lord

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Lord pitieth them that fear him : For he knoweth our frame, Psal. 103. 13, 14.

I may add,

3. *Peace with God* implies the gracious Acceptance of our Services, when springing from a good Intention and a sincere Mind, notwithstanding the many Imperfections which may, and more or less do necessarily attend them. Especially if it be consider'd, that they are presented through the Intercession of a prevailing Advocate, Christ Jesus, who by his Acceptance of them, and upon his Mediation, makes them as it were his own; and though imperfect in themselves, yet for his sake are they esteemed as if they were perfect. They are then estimated not according to their proper and inherent Value, (for what proportion can there be between Infinite and Finite, Perfect and Defective?) but, if I may so speak, according to the Image and Superscription they bear; as they are the Performances of Obedient Children, and are presented, (as I have said) by our High Priest, *who is holy and undefiled, and who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty* Heb. 7. 26. 8. 1. *in the heavens.*

I Observe further,

4. That in this Phrase *Peace with God*, there is implied a mutual Reconciliation; and that upon our Reconciliation to Him, through Christ, he as

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ver. 5. a mark of his Reconciliation to us, gives us his Holy Spirit. So our Apostle, after he had said that we have access by Faith into this Grace, wherein we stand; in consequence of that he saith, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. So Galat. 4. 6. Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: The Spirit of God being the Divine Power which doth bring our Spirits into a due Conformity to it self.

And yet as if this were not sufficient, our Apostle carries the Argument further, ver. 9, 10. Being Justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him: For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

After all, we may observe how cautiously the Apostle doth express himself; for after he had proposed Abraham as an instance of one Justified by Faith, he further explains himself; that so we might not mistake, and think that it was for the sake of Faith alone, and of Faith at large, that we are Justified; but as our Faith has relation to Christ, to Him as the Object of it, and to Him as the Means by whom that Favour was procured. So in the Text, *Therefore being Justified by Faith we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom*

whom also we have access by Faith into his Grace wherein we stand.

It is through him that the Favour of Almighty God is conveyed to us. Are we justified freely by his Grace? It is through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Rom. 3. 24.

Is Peace made for us? It is by the Blood of his Cross that he reconciled all things to himself, Col. 1. 19.

Have we Forgiveness of Sins? It is through his Blood, Ephes. 1. 7.

Are we adopted to be his Children? It is by Jesus Christ, Ephes. 1. 5.

Do we offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God? It is by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

Are we made strong? It is in the Lord, and in the power of his Might, Ephes. 6. 10.

Is God said to save us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost? It is, as 'tis shed on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour, Tit. 3. 5, 6.

Is Eternal Life the Gift of God? It is through Jesus Christ, Rom. 6. 23.

In short, we are said to be Pardoned, to be Justified, to be Accepted, to be Sanctified, to be Saved by him.

So that from the beginning to the end of the Gospel, through the whole Contexture and Frame of it, Christ is interwoven, it is all done by him, or

through him, or of him. By him the Grace, and Favour, and Gifts of God descend upon us; and by him again all that we do is sanctified, accepted, and rewarded.

After this manner speaks our Apostle, 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31. *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

There is then no Religion without Christ; for other Foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 3. 11: And no Favour or Salvation is there to be obtain'd, but through him, Acts 4. 11, 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*

If it should be enquired whence all this proceeds, that there is such a Scheme or Order laid down, and that through all the parts of it Christ is thus essential to it, thus interwoven with it?

I answer, It is partly with respect to Christ himself, partly with respect to us.

With respect to himself; and that the Apostle doth with great Emphasis describe, Phil. 2. 6, &c. *That being in the form of God, he thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a*

man

man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. That is, that upon these two Acts of Debasement, in taking upon him the form of a Servant, and becoming obedient unto the death of the Cross, he was exalted by God to this Supreme Authority.

But this, though a Reason as to himself and his Exaltation, yet hath not that immediate respect to us, unless we take in the Reason of his Sufferings; and that, besides the intimation in this place, our Apostle elsewhere abundantly supplies, and particularly 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin [or Sin-Offering] for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:* That is, that we might be pardoned by virtue of the Atonement he made; and we for his sake might be accepted, and our imperfect Services rewarded, as if we were righteous, and they were perfect.

Now then, since it is manifest from the whole, that God would not pardon Sin without a Propitiation, nor accept our Services without a Mediator, it gives the Reason why He, who is both, should be thus.

thus dignified by the Father, and why this Article is so often inserted in Scripture, and made the Basis of our Religion, and made an essential Article for us to believe.

And especially doth the Apostle very pertinently introduce it in the Text, when having said, *being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God*, he immediately adds, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*; lest our Faith should be thought to be the Reason, as it is the Condition of our Justification.

No, it is He and He only, *who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*; that according as it is written, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, and in him alone*.

From all which we may observe, That as the Love of God in Christ is the great Subject of the Holy Scriptures; so it shews what is to be the chief Subject of our Thoughts as Christians; and of our Discourses and Instructions as we are the *Ministers of Christ*, 1 Cor. 4. 1. That we *preach Christ crucified, as the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*. And this not only in contradiction to those that oppose it now, as the *Jews and Greeks* heretofore did, to one of whom it was a *stumbling-block*, and to the other *foolishness*; but also and more especially, as it is the sole ground of our Peace and Comfort. Our Apostle could not reflect upon it without a Transport of Satisfaction; he

1 Cor. I.

23, 24.

he was, as it were, in an Extasy upon the Contem-
plation of it: *We rejoice, saith he, we glory, ----we* ver. 2,
joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we 3, 11.
have received the atonement.

By which there is such ample Provision made
for the Quiet of our Minds, as will answer all the
Exigences, scatter all the Fears that the Minds of
poor Sinners are entangled with.

What are the Causes from whence all these Mi-
series do spring? From whence do they arise? but
from the Corruption of their Nature, the Power
of Temptations, the Terrors of their own Con-
sciences, the Imperfections of their Services, the
Natural Fears of Death, and the Dread of a Fu-
ture Judgment; each of which carries Despair along
with it, if we have nothing to have recourse to,
but Nature and Human Conduct.

But now through Jesus Christ we are in all these
more than Conquerors; by whom, instead of the Com-
plaints of *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver* Rom. 7.
me! we can triumphantly say, *I thank God, through* 24, 25.
Jesus Christ our Lord.

And into what can all this be resolved, but into
the Favour and Grace of God through Christ? since
it is all this while upon such a Condition, as by no
means can enter into the Consideration; for it is no
other than Faith, by which we are here said to be
justified.

But

Jam. 2.
19.

But after all, who can think of being Justified and Saved for a worthless and ineffectual Faith ; a Faith that men might have been as Good without as with it ; a *Faith of Devils*, that with their Faith continue to be Devils still ?

chap. 4.
16.

Can we suppose this to have been the Faith of *Abraham*, or would he upon the account of such a Faith have been stiled *the Father of us all* ? And would it have been said by our Apostle, *It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him, but for us also* ? Or rather, would it have been written at all, if he had not shewed the Power of his Faith by as powerful Works ? Or can we think we are Imitators of him, if we *stagger* in our Obedience, how firm soever we would be thought to be in our Faith ?

No, it must be an operative and an effectual Faith, a Faith that purifies the Heart, and governs the Life ; that carries through all the difficulties of this our Pilgrimage here, and that makes us to aspire after and fits us for a Glory that is to come.

Such a Faith intitles us to the Promises of God, and to all the Privileges of the New Covenant ; for saith our Apostle, *Being Justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

F I N I S.



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